

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. Claims 9 and 19-25 have been withdrawn from consideration. Based on the amendments made herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding Official Action.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10-17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because of antecedent basis problems.

In view of this, claim 10 has been amended to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 6, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Murphy (USP 5,103,976). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to claim:

a plate-like support element provided in an area surrounded by the frame for supporting the substrate, the support element having a first opening provided between the pair of first frame portions and the pair of second frame portions, wherein the first opening penetrates through the entire support element from a first side of the support element to a second side of the support element opposite the first side, the first side of the support element for placing the substrate on

Support for this feature is disclosed at least in Fig. 9A of the present application.

In addition, page 37, lines 10-20 of the specification describes pins entering from the lower surface of support element/part to raise the substrate. This can only be possible if the first

opening extends through the entire support element. Although the description therein is not directly directed to the elected species shown in Figs. 9A-10B, this feature is common among all of the embodiments of the present application.

The slot 94 shown in Fig. 1 of Murphy is not an opening “through the entire support element from a first side of the support element to a second side of the support element opposite the first side,” but rather an indentation or a recess, and is clearly shown in Fig. 1 of Murphy as not penetrating through the support element 32 (which the Examiner is equating with the claimed “support element”).

As outlined in page 33 of the specification, such a claimed opening is clearly advantageous over the prior art. The provision of such an opening reduces the weight of the substrate accommodating tray in its entirety, and also reduces the amount of material necessary for producing the substrate accommodating tray, thereby reducing costs. In addition, as described above, with regard to page 37 of the specification, such an opening is used to remove the substrate from the tray.

Applicants note that claim 1 has also been amended to claim:

a first opening provided between the pair of first frame portions and the pair of second frame portions

Applicants submit that Murphy does not disclose or suggest an opening between the pair of storage packet areas 36, 37, 50 (which the Examiner is equating with the claimed “first frame portions”) and the pair of storage packet areas 42, 43, 53 (which the Examiner is equating with the claimed “second frame portions”).

Claims 3, 6, and 18, dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

In view of this, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

(a) Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murphy. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2, dependent on claim 1, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(b) Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murphy in view of Ikeguchi (JP 10-007171). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 4, dependent on claim 1, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(c) Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murphy in view of Thomas et al. (USP 6,227,372). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 5, dependent on claim 1, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 7-8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations and any intervening claims, and that claims 10-17 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §

112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants, however, believe that these claims, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

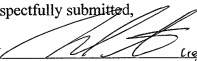
In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi Reg. No. 40,417 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

for By  (reg. # 40,417)
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